

Judges 11:1-3 - Thursday, December 20th, 2012

(1) Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he *was* the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah.

- This is yet another one of those places in God's Word that leaves many a man scratching their heads as to whom God chooses and uses.
- By any stretch of the imagination, this Jephthah would not only be the least but he would be the last one you would think should be a judge.
- After all, he was an illegitimate child who was born as the result of his father committing adultery with a prostitute. Surely, he's disqualified!

- You'll forgive my rhetoric, but try as you may, you will not find even one, save Jesus Himself, who after being vetted, would ever be chosen.
- By that I mean, every single man or women of God, who was mightily used of God, came with an enormous amount of baggage, if you will.
- I believe it's for this reason the Holy Spirit deemed it fit to include what is arguably too much information concerning Jephthah's mother.

- The reason we need to know his mother was a prostitute is that it's germane to our understanding of why it is that God chooses such men.
- Simply put, it brings glory to God in that there's no way the Jephthah's of this world could ever take the credit for that which only God does.
- Replete throughout the pages of Holy Writ, we see God choosing the foolish things of this world in order that He may confound the wise.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NIV (26) Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. (27) But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (28) He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, (29) so that no one may boast before him.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest that the common denominator with all the men and women that God called would fall into this category.
- If the truth be known, were it not for truths in scripture such as the one before us, it's unlikely I would ever be a pastor standing before you.
- In other words, were it not that I was not influential, not of noble birth, not wise by human standards, and not strong, I would not be called.

- This begs the question of why, why is it that God chooses and uses the foolish to confound the wise? I believe there are several reasons.
- First, as we're told in 1 Corinthians, it's so that no one may boast before God. Second, it's so that only God alone will receive the glory.
- It's this third reason that I wish to focus on for just a bit, because it's one from which we can all find great encouragement and hope.

- Here's what I'm thinking, if God can use men like Jephthah, he can use people like you and me, in spite of our dysfunctional family tree.
- I think of Peter, who by any stretch of the imagination, should have never been used by the Lord, after he, three times, denied the Lord.
- I think of Mark, who should've been disqualified after he bailed on Paul and Barnabas, yet he's chosen to pen the gospel baring his name.

- By the way this Jephthah though he was born because of the sin of prostitution would be named in what we call the "Hall of Fame of Faith."

Hebrews 11:32 NIV And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets,

- While I am keenly aware that we're still on verse one, perhaps you'll indulge me just a little while longer as I take this even one step further.

Matthew 1:1-6 NIV A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, (3) Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, (4) Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, (5) Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, (6) and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

- Do you realize what's woven into the fabric of just this portion of the Christ's genealogy? There's adultery, murder, and even prostitution.
- Here's how I get there, Tamar sold herself as a prostitute in order to seduce her father-in-law and from that Perez and Zerah were born.
- Rahab also was a prostitute, who helped the spies in Jericho, leading to the Israelites victory over Jericho, gives birth to of all men, Boaz.

- Even Ruth, though never a prostitute, was still a Moabite, which would make her a Gentile. This was in and of itself scandalous to the Jew.
- Then there's King David and Bathsheba whose marriage was birthed out of adultery, and subsequently the murder of Uriah to cover it up.
- Time doesn't permit me to address the rest of the genealogy, where we have an under aged teenage girl getting pregnant out of wedlock.

- Be that as it may, what we have here is the genealogy of the Savior of the world, which would rival any Hollywood movie or reality show.
- The bottom line is regardless of my ability, my past, my ancestry, my age, and my gender, God can still use little ol' me to borrow an idiom.
- Aren't you glad that it's this way? Aren't you glad that God uses people like Jephthah, to do grand and glorious things? I for one sure am!

(2) Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have no inheritance in our father's house, for you *are* the son of another woman."

- I guess that's what Jephthah gets for being born to a prostitute. Though it's through no fault of his own, he is now ostracized because of it.
- What's interesting about this is that they have no idea how that they have just driven out the very man whom God will use to deliver them.
- The reason I find this interesting is that it speaks to how it is that we should be very careful and even prayerful in our treatment of others.

- Incidentally, it may have been for this very reason that Jephthah became such a mighty man of valor. He had to get tough and be tough.
- At the risk of I'm psychoanalyzing him, it does stand to reason that often times, when one is picked on as a child, they learn to fight back.
- I'm quite certain that he was teased and bullied and even beat up on for no reason other than the fact that his mother was a prostitute.

(3) Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out *raiding* with him.

- Here we're told Jephthah had to flee, and in so doing "worthless" men band together with him so as to go out and become raiders with him.
- Now, there's a problem with this word "worthless" in the sense that it doesn't necessarily mean what we would understand it to mean today.
- The word carries with it the idea of being of less worth, or being impoverished, if you prefer, having no real material wealth or possessions.

Adam Clarke "The word may, ...mean in this place *poor persons, without property, and without employment.*"

- We see a similarity with David in 1 Samuel 25:4-8, where these type of men, would, as one said it; "protect cities from marauders for pay."
- The reason I point this out is that when David fled, the men that banded together with him, were like the men who banded with Jephthah .

1 Samuel 22:1-2 NIV David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. (2) All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

- There's one more thing here before we move on to verse four. Notice how that Jephthah fled to the land of Tob. Tob is modern day Syria.
- The significance of this is that the land at this time would have been riddled with lawlessness, which is why these men banded together.
- To me, this speaks to how it is that God will prepare us for that which he will prepare for us. For Jephthah, this will be invaluable training.